

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
CODEWORD

ACTION

September 20, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM:

Mr. Clift 

SUBJECT:

Brezhnev's Meeting with Zarodov

*Disputed  
with President  
[Signature]*

The information memorandum for your signature to the President at Tab A would review Brezhnev's recent meeting with Konstantin Zarodov, Chief Editor of the communist journal Problems of Peace and Socialism, and the possibility that this may signal a harder line by the USSR with European Communist parties -- a line against communist party accommodation with the socialists and other more moderate parties in Europe.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum at Tab A.

NSS Review Completed.

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MEMORANDUM


THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger 

SUBJECT: A Hint of Leadership Trouble for Brezhnev and Possible Soviet Pressure for a New Hardline by West European Communists

A terse Moscow Radio announcement on September 17 that General Secretary Brezhnev had met with Konstantin Zarodov, Chief Editor of the international communist journal Problems of Peace and Socialism, has led CIA analysts to speculate that Brezhnev and other advocates of detente in the Soviet leadership believe themselves politically vulnerable right now and that the CPSU may be considering pressures on West European communist parties to take a new hardline toward cooperation with socialist and other moderate parties. The following paragraphs review developments leading to the Brezhnev-Zarodov meeting and summarize CIA thinking as to the implications.

Background

On August 6, Pravda published an article by Zarodov entitled "The Leninist Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Struggle." Probably prompted -- in State INR's view -- by recent events in Portugal, France and Italy as well as preparations for the European Communist Conference, the article strikingly reasserts Soviet hardline revolutionary doctrine and contrasts sharply with the prevailing view in Moscow that the formation of united fronts with socialist parties is the best way to influence the policies of capitalist states and to prepare the way for the eventual socialist revolution -- a view Brezhnev has been closely identified with in the past. It attacked "opportunists" and "moderates" in the communist movement who are willing to compromise revolutionary goals in order to preserve tactical alliances with socialist parties, and accused "modern conciliators" of being willing to dissolve the communist party in an "amorphous organization or alliance."

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While Zarodov's tough talk seemed to be a qualified endorsement of the Portuguese Party's policy, he clearly was taking issue with the stance of the French, Italian and possibly Spanish Communist parties -- and they reacted accordingly. The French Party on August 8 reiterated its intention to use the electoral route to attain political dominance, and on August 12, the Italian Party paper, L'Unita, stated that "we view the relationship between democracy and socialism quite differently from the manner in which it is delineated in the doctrinaire scheme of the article published by Pravda." On September 13, the Yugoslav press revived the quarrel, warning West European parties that Moscow -- "having tried unsuccessfully to dominate the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions" -- "is now attemptin<sup>25X1</sup> force the European parties to comply with Soviet ideological guidelines and foreign policies."

[redacted] Ponomarev met with an Italian <sup>25X1</sup>  
 Communist Party delegation in Moscow from August 6-9 and the joint  
 CPSU-PCI statement [redacted] <sup>25X1</sup>  
 published on August 9 did not reflect the Zarodov line. In response to  
 later Western inquiries about the article, [redacted] that it  
 had been a "bureaucratic mistake."

25X1

### Conclusion

Some sense can be made of Brezhnev's meeting with Zarodov only in the context of developments in August and September -- such as the Sinai agreement and setbacks to the Portuguese Communist Party -- that have left the Kremlin detente team of Brezhnev, Andropov, Grechko and Gromyko vulnerable to charges that they have been lax in defending Soviet great power and ideological interests out of concern to preserve detente with the West. As bitter pills as the Sinai agreement and unexpected difficulties in relations with the U.S. must be, the declining fortunes of the Portuguese party, following the Chilean debacle, undoubtedly has left a particularly sour taste in the mouths of those leaders troubled by the conflicting priorities of detente with the West and the health of the international communist movement.

If detente is presently under heavy fire in Moscow, as the foregoing presumes, it would be totally characteristic of Brezhnev -- feeling the chill wind of political vulnerability -- to choose a meeting with the hardline Zarodov as a way to trim. At the same time, Brezhnev is too experienced in Kremlin

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politics and pronouncements to be oblivious to the implications of so prominently associating himself with the anti-detentist Zarodov -- in the eyes of observers in the USSR, in Western Europe and its communist parties, and in the U.S. Whether the meeting with Zarodov hints current Kremlin sympathy for his line (with all the consequences for Soviet detente policy) or is merely a risky tactical maneuver by Brezhnev to protect a vulnerable political flank remains to be seen.

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